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## Afghanistan Situation Report

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18 November 1986

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**AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT**

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**CONTENTS****SURGE IN LATE-AUTUMN FIGHTING**

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Soviet and Afghan regime forces responded to a recent surge in insurgent attacks by mounting counterinsurgency operations in the northern Shomali Plain and lower Panjsher Valley and in Nangarhar Province. In addition, fighting for control of Qandahar city has spread to outlying areas.

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**SPLIT IN THE SHIA HAKKAT-I-ISLAMI PARTY**

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The Iranian Government is attempting to use its support for Shia insurgent groups to give it a larger voice in arrangements for any post-Soviet coalition Afghan regime. Its efforts to unify Shia Afghan guerrilla forces have caused a rift in Hakkat-i-Islami, however.

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**CONSUMER SHORTAGES AND HIGH PRICES IN KABUL**

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Recently identified shortages of important consumer commodities in Kabul are probably the result of hoarding, agricultural problems, and flagging Soviet willingness to support the mushrooming population in the capital.

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**IN BRIEF**

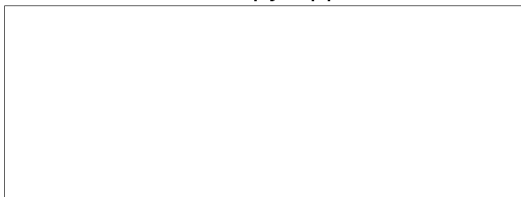
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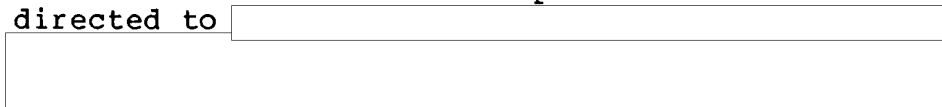
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Office of Soviet Analysis. Questions or comments  
on the issues raised in the publication should be  
directed to

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**SURGE IN LATE-AUTUMN FIGHTING**

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Heavy fighting between Soviet and Afghan regime forces and insurgents occurred north and south of the Salang Tunnel last week.

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North of the Salang, insurgent commander Masood's forces destroyed three Soviet helicopters and attacked two Soviet outposts near the Soviet border in Takhar Province, according to US Embassy sources.

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Multiple Soviet and Afghan operations were under way outside of Qandahar.

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US Embassy sources also reported heavy civilian casualties from clashes 25 kilometers southwest of the city. Afghan regime forces apparently captured several substantial supply caches.

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**SPLIT IN THE SHIA HARAKAT-I-ISLAMI PARTY**

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Iranian Government efforts to unify Shia Afghan insurgents under the leadership of Pasadran and Nasr have caused a split in the Harakat-i-Islami organization led by Shaykh Asif Mohseni. (The Mohseni group should not be confused with the Harakat-Inqilab-i-Islami, a Sunni

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group, led by Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, and a member of the seven-party resistance alliance). Mohseni had agreed in late 1985 to relocate Harakat's office to Qom as part of an Iranian plan to tighten its control over all Shia resistance groups. Shah Musa Rezavi, a moderate Hazara commander from the Ghazni area and head of Harakat's "Internal Council", objected and has formed a Pakistani-based organization. Both Mohseni and Rezavi claim 2,000 fighters. [REDACTED]

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**COMMENT:** Iran is probably seeking to build a strong but pliable and loyal organization which can credibly demand a share of political power in any post-Soviet coalition government. The Iranians believe that creating a militarily dominant Afghan Shia organization will eventually force Shia factions, such as Harakat, to join the Iranian-controlled groups. Rezavi may succeed in allying with the Jamiat-i-Islami but probably will be rebuffed by other fundamentalist groups because his religious sect and ethnic origin are held in contempt by most Afghans. [REDACTED]

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#### **CONSUMER SHORTAGES AND HIGH PRICES IN KABUL**

 [REDACTED]

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A market survey conducted in Kabul in late October by officials of the US Embassy indicates that some important commodities--including wheat, milk, and kerosene--are in short supply. The survey also shows that the prices of such staples as bread, flour, vegetable oil, and fresh produce have increased substantially over the last two years. To improve the situation, the regime has begun to enforce regulations prohibiting the transport of foodstuffs out of Kabul. Government troops at checkpoints on major roads from Kabul are now inspecting all civilian vehicles leaving the city. The regime also is considering instituting price controls, according to the US Embassy. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

**COMMENT:** The shortages are probably partly the result of hoarding by Kabul residents in preparation for winter and of the poor agricultural situation in northern Afghanistan--a key food-producing area. Officials of the US Embassy believe the shortage may indicate that the Soviets' willingness to support Kabul's burgeoning population economically through the provision of goods to Kabul is flagging. In recent years, imports from the Soviet Union have comprised an increasing share of the goods available in Kabul markets. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

-- A new domestic terminal opened at Kabul International Airport earlier this month, according to press reports. The terminal project is part of a general upgrade of the facility by the Soviets. The runway and other facilities have also been upgraded to improve handling of a high volume of military traffic, according to the US Embassy. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

-- On 13 November, Canada announced it would soon lift sanctions imposed on the Soviet Union following the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, according to press reports. Canadian officials claim the sanctions--which involve cultural, educational, scientific, and technical exchanges--are being abandoned because they have not been effective. [REDACTED]

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-- Afghanistan's Bakhtar Airlines has already made two cargo-only flights to the Federal Republic of Germany as the first step toward resuming regular flights to Western Europe, according to the US Embassy in Kabul. The airline also is modifying its aircraft to meet British noise pollution standards. Resumption of passenger flights will probably be delayed until Bakhtar is able to renegotiate its insurance policy, and France has not yet indicated whether it will grant landing rights to Bakhtar. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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